



## What are zoonotic diseases?

Owning a pet can be a wonderful, rewarding experience for you and your family. However, pets can transmit diseases that may be harmful to humans – especially young children and people with certain medical conditions. These are called zoonotic diseases or zoonoses (pronounced zoo-NO-sees).

There are two types of zoonotic diseases that concern pet owners: illnesses that can be transmitted from animals to humans – like leptospirosis – and diseases that infect both people and pets – like Lyme disease. That's why it's important to take precautions to protect both your family and your pet from zoonotic diseases. You share many things with your pet, but disease shouldn't be one of them.



## How National Pet Wellness Month is helping dogs and cats nationwide.

National Pet Wellness Month is a joint initiative by your veterinarian, the American Veterinary Medical Association and Fort Dodge Animal Health to help all pets live longer, healthier and happier lives.

How? By emphasizing the importance of:

- Twice-a-year wellness exams to help detect, treat and prevent health problems before they become serious
- Disease prevention based on your pet's lifestyle, the threats in your area and other risk factors
- Pet owner education, especially awareness of the pet aging process

Thousands of U.S. veterinary clinics are now participating in National Pet Wellness Month; and millions of pet owners have discovered the benefits of routine, preventive care for dogs and cats. Are you one of them? For more information about all the ways you can keep your pet healthy, see your veterinarian and visit **www.NPWM.com** today.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
Human Ehrlichiosis in the United States.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/ehrlichia/Signs/Signs.htm>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
Lyme Disease United States 2001-2002.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5317a4.htm>



## Zoonotic diseases: The shared threat.

**How to protect your family  
and your pet.**



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# Zoonotic diseases that affect people.

**Cat scratch disease** – Also known as “cat scratch fever,” this flea-borne infection is typically transmitted from a cat’s scratch or bite. Signs include pimples at the scratch site and swollen lymph nodes that may persist for six weeks or longer.

**Ehrlichiosis** – Transmitted by ticks, this bacterial disease can cause fever, muscle aches, vomiting and other, more serious symptoms. As many as half of all patients require hospitalization<sup>1</sup>.

**Giardia** – People become infected when they drink water containing the parasite *Giardia lamblia*. You can also become infected by putting something in your mouth that has come into contact with a pet’s stool. Signs include diarrhea, stomach cramps and nausea.

**Leptospirosis** – “Lepto” is a bacterial disease spread by contact with urine from an infected animal, including dogs, raccoons, squirrels and skunks. Lepto can cause high fever, severe headache, vomiting and, if left untreated, kidney damage or liver failure.

**Lyme disease** – Spread by ticks, Lyme disease can cause arthritis and kidney damage. The number of Lyme disease cases has nearly tripled since 1990<sup>2</sup>, and the disease is now found in virtually every state.

**Rabies** – This well-known disease is caused by a virus found in the saliva of infected animals and transmitted to people by bites. It is invariably fatal if not promptly treated.

**Ringworm** – Ringworm is a fungal infection – not a worm – transmitted by contact with the skin or fur of an infected dog or cat. Signs include a bald patch of scaly skin on the scalp, or a ring-shaped, itchy rash on the skin.

**Rocky Mountain spotted fever** – A very serious, tick-borne disease that causes fever, headache and muscle pain, followed by a rash. May be fatal if left untreated.

**Toxoplasmosis** – This is a parasitic disease spread by contact with cat feces in soil or litter, although the major route of transmission is contaminated meat. It can cause serious health problems in pregnant women or in people with compromised immune systems.

# Simple ways to protect your family.



- Wash your hands often when touching, playing with or caring for pets.
- Never handle the stool of any animal without wearing disposable gloves or using a plastic barrier.
- Avoid kissing your pet or letting your pet lick your face.
- Do daily “tick checks” on yourself, your kids and your pet. If you find a tick, use tweezers to slowly pull it out. After removing the tick, immerse it in rubbing alcohol. Wash the tick bite wound and your hands with soap and water.
- If you are pregnant, ask someone else in the family to clean the cat’s litter box. If you must do it yourself, wear gloves and immediately wash your hands after changing the litter.
- Wash your hands after gardening or working in soil where pets may have relieved themselves.
- If you are scratched or bitten, wash the area with soap and water right away and administer first aid. If you are concerned, contact your healthcare professional.

- See your veterinarian and make sure your pet is protected against zoonoses and other disease threats in your area.



# Proven ways to protect your pet.

Many zoonotic diseases can be prevented by vaccination. Vaccines are now available for leptospirosis, Lyme disease, rabies and giardia.

In addition, twice-a-year wellness exams performed by your veterinarian can help detect and treat zoonotic infections before they become serious, or are transmitted to other pets or people in your household.

Don’t forget to take these other steps to protect your pet:

- Ask your veterinarian about tick and flea control
- Brush and inspect your pet for ticks after each outing
- Don’t let your pet drink from standing water outdoors
- Don’t let your pet come into contact with feces or urine of other animals
- Remove food, garbage or nesting materials that may attract disease-carrying wildlife

For more information about zoonotic disease protection for your family - and your pet - contact your veterinarian, and visit [www.NPWM.com](http://www.NPWM.com) today.



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